Benjamin Rush and John Minson Galt, II:

Pioneers of Bibliotherapy in America*†

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ABSTRACT

The history of bibliotherapy in America goes back at least to the early part of the nineteenth century. Benjamin Rush was one of the first Americans to recommend the use of bibliotherapy; John Minson Galt, II, was the first American to write an article on the subject. Reading was considered one of the best therapeutic measures in treating mental patients, and by the middle of the nineteenth century every major mental hospital had a patients' library; many were quite extensive. Newspapers and periodicals were supplied in great numbers, and the works of Sir Walter Scott enjoyed great popularity.

ALTHOUGH the literature on bibliotherapy is quite extensive (1–3), relatively little has been written about its history. The few historical articles which have been written are largely, if not entirely, concerned with developments since 1900. As McDaniel has pointed out, the casual reader of the literature can easily get the impression that before 1900 bibliotherapy did not exist (4). Beatty's recent article in *Library Trends* did not dispel this impression (5). The fact is, however, that bibliotherapy not only existed before 1900, it flourished. It was one of the most important of the existing methods of psychotherapy and was generally considered second only to outdoor exercise in its curative efficacy.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Pinel in France, Chiarugi in Italy, and Tuke in England, among others, advocated more humane methods of treating the insane. The newer methods were divided roughly into two broad classes, physical and moral. The so-called "moral" treatment of the insane was everything that was not physical or medical (6, 7), and consisted largely of various forms of employment and amusements, which today would be called occupational and recreational therapy. Reading was one of the most popular means of recreation, and libraries were established in most of the better mental hospitals of Europe by the end

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of the eighteenth century and of America by the middle of the nineteenth century.

One of the first Americans to recommend reading for the sick was Benjamin Rush. In a lecture, "On the Construction and Management of Hospitals," delivered on November 10, 1802, Rush said, "For the amusement and instruction of patients in a hospital, a small library should by all means compose a part of its furniture" (8). Rush then recommended two types of reading, that which provides entertainment and that which conveys knowledge. The former, he said, should consist of travel books, which he considered "extremely exhilarating to convalescents, and to persons confined by chronic diseases." The latter "should be upon philosophical, moral and religious subjects." He recommended also that every hospital subscribe to one or more newspapers and that these should be sent to the wards after having been read by the officers of the hospital. In newspapers "will be found something . . . which may help to beguile the evils of sickness and confinement" (9).

Benjamin Rush was also one of the first Americans to recommend reading for the mentally ill. In a letter dated September 24, 1810, outlining his recommendations to the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the treatment of the insane, Rush made the following recommendation:

> That an intelligent man and woman be employed to attend the different sexes, whose business shall be to direct and share in their amusements and to divert their minds by conversation, reading, and obliging them to read and write upon subjects suggested from time to time by the attending physicians (10).

The number and variety of amusements in early American mental hospitals was large, and it must have been quite a task to arrange them all. The new job classification which Rush was calling for was that of a combination recreational-bibliotherapist. Rush said that these recommendations were prompted by his own twenty-five years' experience in treating the mentally ill and from his reading of "the histories of Asylums for mad people in foreign countries" (11). These "histories" were undoubtedly the annual reports of the leading European insane asylums of the day. These reports functioned as psychiatric journals and were widely circulated.

Of the European influences on Rush, perhaps the most important was that of the York Retreat in England, administered by members of the Tuke family for several generations. As Sigerist has said,

> It was visited every year by scores of physicians from continental Europe and America and exerted by the mere force of its example a far-reaching influence that was particularly felt in America (12).

At least four American insane asylums were directly patterned after the York Retreat; they were the Hartford Retreat, the Bloomingdale Asylum, the McLean Hospital, and the Asylum for the Relief of Persons Deprived of the Use of Their Reason, later called the Friends Asylum. That the York Retreat had a library can be inferred from the book selection policies laid down by Samuel Tuke in his *Description of the Retreat:*

> There certainly requires considerable care in the selection of books for the use of the insane. The works of imagination are generally, for obvious reasons, to be avoided; and such as are in any degree connected with the peculiar notions of the patient, are decidedly objectionable. The various branches of the mathematics and natural science, furnish the most useful class of subjects on which to employ the minds of the insane; and they should, as much as possible, be induced to pursue one subject steadily. Any branch of knowledge with which the patient has been previously acquainted, may be resumed with greater ease; and his disposition to pursue it will be encouraged by the competency which he is able to exhibit (13).

These principles were adopted by many American asylums. The York Retreat, a Quaker institution, did not permit novels to be read until around the middle of the nineteenth century. Even in the United States novels were considered by many to be more a cause than a cure of insanity. Isaac Ray, of the Butler Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island, was particularly vehement in denouncing cheap novels and trashy newspapers as causes of insanity (14), and one not infrequently finds in those annual reports which give a statistical breakdown of the cause of insanity among the patients admitted that "reading novels" is put down as one of the causes. Benjamin Rush mentions as another way in which reading can be a cause of insanity the reader's need to direct his attention rapidly and frequently from one subject to another. He wrote, in his *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind,* "It is said booksellers have sometimes become deranged from this cause" (15), an etiology which might apply as well to deranged librarians. He goes on to say that, "The debilitating effects of these sudden transitions upon the mind, are sensibly felt after reading a volume of reviews or magazines" (16).

Despite all this, Benjamin Rush was more favorably disposed to fiction than many of his contemporaries. In his *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind,* which contains many references to reading as an adjunct to psychotherapy, Rush relates several cases where reading novels was beneficial. For example, he recommends reading novels as a cure for melancholy, noting that the poet Cowper often relieved his melancholy by this means (17). He also relates a case of a woman who cured herself of melancholy by translating Telemachus into English verse; he says that the remedy in this case was constant employment. In discussing hypochondria Rush recommends "Committing entertaining

passages of prose and verse to MEMORY, and copying manuscripts.... Reading aloud has nearly the same effect" (18). He goes on to say that "Dr. Burton recommends, in the highest terms, the reading of the BIBLE to hypochondriac patients. He compares it to an apothecary's shop, in which is contained remedies for every disease of the body" (19). Reading the Bible is also recommended for the "languor and depression of mind which occur in the evening of life" (20). Rush then adds:

> Where there is no relish for the simple and interesting stories contained in the Bible, the reading of novels should be recommended to our patients. They contain a series of supposed events which arrest the attention, and cause the mind to forget itself. It is because they so uniformly produce this effect that they are often resorted to by old people even of elevated understandings, in order to divert themselves from the depression of spirits which the death or treachery of friends, bodily pain, and the dread of futurity, create in their minds (21).

In his discussion of the treatment of mania, Rush gives the case of Dr. Boerhaave, who, being on the verge of insanity as the result of lack of sleep and overmuch study, was cured by being "torn from his books, and allured into agreeable company." Rush is quick to note, however, that the remedy in such cases is not so much the cessation of reading, but the change in the subject matter from the abstruse and difficult to lighter fare. Held up as examples are Rousseau and Mr. M'Laurin, a friend of Isaac Newton, who

> made it a practice to relieve his mind, when debilitated by hard study, and thereby predisposed to this disease [mania], by reading novels and romances; and such was his knowledge of them, that the late Dr. Gregory informed me he was often appealed to for the character of every work of that kind that appeared in the English language (22).

Farther on, Dr. Rush says, "The return of regularity and order in the operations of the mind will be much aided, by obliging mad people to read with an audible voice, to copy manuscripts, and to commit interesting passages from books to memory" (23). The most useful of these three methods, he says, is memorizing select passages from books, for this requires greater efforts of the mind. In order that this type of therapy might be practiced, "a few entertaining books of history, travels, and prints, should compose a part of the shop furniture of every public and private mad-house."

When the mind is deranged upon all subjects, Dr. Rush recommends fixing it upon one. This is to be done by finding out the favorite studies and amusements of the patients and keeping them occupied with these activities. Cases are related of a patient who was cured by studying mathematics, of which he had been fond in early life, of another, Cowper again,

who was able to maintain his mental equilibrium by translating Homer, and of a third who was cured by being constantly employed in playing cards, to which she always had a strong attachment (24).

In the *Medical Inquiries and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind,* Rush again strongly recommends, for "all public receptacles of mad people," that someone be appointed to act as a kind of recreational therapist:

> His business should be, to divert them from conversing upon all the subjects upon which they had been deranged, to tell them pleasant stories, to read to them select passages from entertaining books, and to oblige them to read to him . . . (25).

In another interesting passage Rush writes that patients near recovery should be required "to apply their eye to some simple and entertaining book." He says that they will acquire ideas in this way quicker than by his conversing with them, "in consequence of the longer impressions of words upon the eyes than upon the ears, when they are pronounced in the ordinary rapid manner of common conversation" (26). He makes the curious statement that reading sometimes makes scholars out of dull boys and dullards out of bright boys. He accounts for this by saying that reading over-stimulates the minds of bright boys. For them he recommends oral instruction. The difference between listening and reading was noted also in the chapter on memory, where Rush wrote:

> We are seldom satisfied in hearing a news-paper read; hence, when it is thrown down, we take it up, and convey to our minds, through the medium of our own eyes, the facts we have just before heard (27).

The importance of hearing is not underrated, however. Those whose memories are weak, for whatever reason, are often unable to retain what they read unless they read aloud. In some cases they cannot remember their own thoughts without rendering them audible; thus they are often seen talking to themselves. Rush appears to contradict himself, however, when he says, "Where the eyes and ears cannot both be employed in acquiring knowledge, the use of the ears should be preferred" (28). At any rate, reading aloud would seem to be the ideal; thus, the bibliotherapist must not only read to the patient, but have the patient read to him.

Two other conditions for which Rush recommends reading are "fatuity from old age" and fear. Referring to the works of Dr. Johnson, Rush says that one of the contributing causes of the insanity of Dean Swift was the fact that he refused to wear glasses, and thus was not able to read in his old age. Benjamin Franklin, on the other hand, is an example of the good effects of reading in prolonging a sound and active condition of the mind in the aged (29). With regard to fear, Rush gives an account of two persons

who expected to be guillotined during the French Revolution. By reading history and science constantly when alone and by conversing on no other subject when together, they were able to lessen the fear of death (30). Another way to remove the fear of death is to have a correct opinion of the divine government,

> and of the relation we sustain to the great Author of our being. These opinions may be best formed by reading the scriptures, and such other books as derive their arguments for fortifying the mind against this fear from them, particularly the works of Dr. Sherlock[1] and Mr. Drelincourt[2], both of which contain a treasure of knowledge and consolation upon this subject (31).

There is no doubt that Rush's book on the diseases of the mind, which went through five American editions, had a great influence on the practice of psychiatry in the United States. Most of his recommendations concerning bibliotherapy were, in fact, carried out by many American insane asylums.

Although Benjamin Rush was one of the first Americans to recommend bibliotherapy, John Minson Galt, II, of Williamsburg, Virginia, was the first American to write an article on the subject and to give an overall picture of libraries in American insane asylums. Galt treated both the theory and the practice of bibliotherapy in some detail, first in the annual reports of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum of Virginia, then in his book, *The Treatment of Insanity* (32), and finally in an essay, "On Reading, Recreation and Amusements for the Insane" (33), published in 1853, but first given as a lecture in 1848.

Various members of the Galt family had been connected in one way or another with the administration of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum of Virginia ever since it first opened in 1773 as the first hospital in the United States to be used exclusively for the care of mental patients. Galt's father was physician to the hospital until his death in November 1840. On March 6, 1841, an act of the Virginia legislature made it mandatory that the superintendent of the hospital be a physician; previously the superintendent was usually a layman. The appointment of a new superintendent was held up until John could finish medical school. He assumed his new office in July 1841, at the age of twenty-two. When the American Psychiatric Association was founded in 1844 (as the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane), Galt was by far

[1] William Sherlock, c. 1641–1707, was an English clergyman. His *Practical Discourse concerning Death,* 1689, went through a great many editions. He also wrote *A Practical Discourse concerning a Future Judgment,* 1692.

[2] Charles Drelincourt, 1595–1669, was a French Protestant minister. His most famous work, *The Christian's Defence against the Fears of Death,* 1651, went through more than forty editions.

the youngest of the thirteen founders. He was a linguist, having mastered twenty languages, an amateur botanist, and a bibliophile (34–37).

Soon after taking over as superintendent of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum of Virginia, Galt began to expand the small collection of books and newspapers with which the patients already were provided. In his 1843 annual report, Galt has a long section entitled "Literary Occupation," in which he discusses the importance of books and reading for mental patients. In it he writes,

> We also purchased a few books for the institution, some time ago; and for the last two years, a newspaper and periodical have been subscribed to in the city of Richmond, for the same purpose. These have been used, however, in general, rather to meet the constant requests of patients, than for any strictly curative purpose. And we have felt the want of a regular library (38).

It is interesting to note that Galt regarded the collection as it existed as having been provided for recreational reading rather than for any specifically therapeutic purpose. He goes on to say that he has recently purchased two bookcases, and that, "in compliance with an order of the board," he shall shortly purchase enough books to form a library, and that he shall make other arrangements so as to render the library "a valuable and regular additional agent in the moral treatment" (39). He then makes an appeal for donations of books and newspapers, remarking that the annual reports of the American state asylums, almost without exception, yearly acknowledge donations of reading material. Following this appeal, Galt discusses the place of reading in the moral treatment of the insane.

Through the annual reports of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum Galt's interest in library service to mental patients became widely known. As a result, in 1847 at the annual meeting of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, Galt was assigned the topic, "On Reading, Recreation and Amusements for the Insane," to be presented as a talk at the next annual meeting. The talk was given the following year, as planned, on Ward's Island, then called Blackwell's Island, in New York City. The talk was not published, however, until 1853, and then only in a slim pamphlet with the innocuous title, "Essays on Asylums for Persons of Unsound Mind. Second Series" (33). This landmark in the history of bibliotherapy has thus far gone unnoticed in both the library and psychiatric literature.

As might be expected, most of the essay, "On Reading, Recreation and Amusements for the Insane," is concerned with reading. Galt begins by saying that one cannot draw a hard and fast line between the sane and the insane, and that the scope of his essay will include both. He then gives five reasons why reading is beneficial for the insane. First, it oc-

cupies the mind, to the exclusion of morbid thoughts and delusions, at least for a short while. It is, therefore, one of the great "revulsive"[3] modes of acting upon the mind. Secondly, reading serves to pass the time; for the chronically insane, especially, it is "a source of comfort that beguiles many a lonely hour, in the long and monotonous track of life's drear journey, spent away from the friends of their youth in the cloistered retirement of an asylum" (40). Third, it imparts instruction. In this essay, Galt does not go into the matter of schools for the insane, feeling that this is beyond the scope of his paper. He does say, however, that a directed course of reading might be more beneficial than reading of a desultory nature. Galt was much interested in schools for the insane, and wrote in his 1843 annual report that the European asylums seemed to be more advanced in this regard than American asylums (41). He mentioned the Hanwell Asylum near London and the Bicêtre near Paris as examples, but noted also that at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane some of the patients were instructing one another. In his 1844 report Galt spoke again of the usefulness of schools, saying,

> We should, however, with hopes of benefit, employ instruction in particular cases, in which there seemed indications for it. And indeed amongst the books which were procured for the library during the last winter, some elementary works were included for this purpose (42).

Although much has been written about schools for the insane, the only hospitals in the United States which established such schools were the Bloomingdale Asylum and the Utica State Hospital. Other hospitals had more or less informal instruction for selected patients.

The fourth reason mentioned by Galt for providing reading material is that it gives the officers of the hospital a chance to show clearly the kindly disposition "thoroughly felt by them towards their afflicted charge." This idea of showing kindness to patients through providing reading material was expressed better, perhaps, by Galt in his 1843 annual report, where he wrote:

> Books also offer a mode of exhibiting our good feelings to a patient by the mere act of lending them to him; and thus bear along with their presence in an asylum a great additional means of management, by increasing our power of carrying out the law of kindness—which we have shown to operate so successfully

[3] "Revulsion" is an old medical term which frequently appears in the literature on the moral treatment of the insane. It means "a drawing away or diversion of humors from one part of the body to another" (Foster, Frank P. *An Illustrated Encyclopaedic Medical Dictionary*. New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1891. Part 6, p. 1275, col. 1, under "Derivation"). As applied to psychiatry, it means the diverting of the mind from morbid thoughts to wholesome ones. By so doing it was thought that a diseased part of the brain was given a rest, and a healthy part was exercised.

> and so beneficially: and I verily believe, that in some cases which have recovered in this asylum, a portion of the successful treatment has consisted in giving them newspapers (43).

A fifth reason for giving reading materials to mental patients is that, by keeping them contented and occupied, it renders them more manageable.

After showing why reading is beneficial, Dr. Galt describes four classes of patients and how reading affects each. The first class of patients is the illiterate, and these can benefit in two ways: they can be taught to read, and they can be read to, either by their fellow patients or by others. The others are not specified. The second class of patients is the educated class, for whom reading has the same beneficial effect that it has on the sane. The third class consists of those who can read, but who can appreciate what they read only to a limited extent. Even for these, according to Dr. Galt, reading has almost the same beneficial effect as it has for the sane, for it at least keeps their minds distracted from their morbid ideas. The "revulsive" effect is thus the same. The fourth and last class of patients consists of the severely deranged, the idiots, and those temporarily in a manic or other acute state of mental disturbance. For these, reading is wholly without benefit or impossible. Also, in certain cases of mental excitement reading is contraindicated, as would be any other mental stimulus.

After these preliminary considerations, Dr. Galt lays down some general rules governing patients' reading, book selection, and the management of the library. He begins by quoting Dr. Etienne-Jean Georget, psychiatrist at the Salpêtrière in Paris, to the effect that patients should never be given anything to read which would tend to corroborate their warped ideas or to excite their volatile emotions (44). The application of this rule, he says, must be adjusted to suit each individual case. All publications of an immoral tendency should be prohibited, and works of fiction should not be allowed to predominate. The principal portion of the library should be, he suggests, travels, biography, history and "the many miscellaneous works which form the charming, polite literature of the English language" (45). Depending on the number and character of the patients, books in foreign languages and on the sciences should be provided; at least a few of these should be in every asylum. In general, the most suitable works are those which are interesting, but not too intellectually demanding, because many of the insane are not capable of concentration for long periods of time, nor, indeed, is the general population of the sane, considered *en masse*. Patients with special subject knowledge or interests are exceptions to this rule. They should be provided with books, however abstruse, in their fields of interest. Indeed, Galt goes so far as to say,

> It being understood also that when a patient is received as to whose peculiar pursuit or department of study, there are no books in the library of such an institution, as great care should be exercised in the procuration of such as we would employ in purchasing an additional medicament to meet some rare physical symptom (46).

The notion of a library as a kind of intellectual pharmacy stocked with remedies for every type of emotional disorder was a not uncommon one. We have already seen this analogy used with reference to the Bible in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Galt quotes briefly from a book by Dr. Maximilian Jacobi, superintendent of a mental hospital in Siegburg, Germany, who said that the book stock should be large enough to meet the needs of each case. Since the passage in Jacobi referred to by Galt is particularly apropos, and since it was a well known and influential work, it might be well to quote it here at greater length than does Galt. Jacobi wrote:

> Further, for those patients who are possessed of a higher order of the intellectual powers here referred to, means must be provided for exercising them in geometry, mathematics, natural philosophy, geography, natural history, and their several branches; in farming and husbandry, scientifically considered; in ancient and modern foreign languages, and in translating from them. However, to obtain any successful results from these studies, in addition to the necessary books, maps, drawings, &c., there must be no deficiency of effective guidance and oversight; and herein the medical as well as the clerical officers of the establishment are expected to render their assistance. With these pursuits is also connected the perusal of books in the various departments of science, and of works of a lighter and more entertaining character. The choice of books for individual patients must be constantly founded upon medical considerations, upon the difference in the mental cultivation of the individual, and the peculiarity of the morbid state in question. The collection of books belonging to the establishment, must be of sufficient magnitude to satisfy the requirements of every case that occurs (47).

The prescription of books for patients was practiced most thoroughly at the Crichton Asylum in Scotland, under the administration of Dr. W. A. F. Browne. In describing this institution, Tuke wrote,

> Collections of books were contemporary with the laboratory and the medical officers invariably carried a catalogue, along with a prescription book, in their daily medical visits to every patient (48).

Another work quoted by Dr. Galt which went a long way toward shaping policies and practices in American mental institutions was the report of the Metropolitan Commissioners in Lunacy, a survey of British practices with recommendations, published in 1844. It states in part:

> No asylum should be without a library. Books, judiciously chosen, especially such as will not encourage any morbid ideas already existing, are an important help in promoting a happy and serene state of mind. In cases of great depression, and

> particularly of religious melancholy, books of a cheerful character should be placed, to a much greater extent than is generally done, at the disposal of the patients. In most of the Asylums that we have visited, we have found an abundance of religious publications, and in some few of them little else. However useful such works may be, we have frequently urged upon the various proprietors and superintendents, the duty of their also procuring books and publications of an entertaining character, adapted to the capacity of the patients under their care (49).

The most striking difference between the type of reading materials provided in British institutions and that provided in American institutions, according to Dr. Galt, is the large number of newspapers to be found in the American institutions. He notes, however, that the Saturday and penny magazines have been favorites with British asylums, and that newspapers and magazines were frequently mentioned in the reports of the asylums at Dundee and Hanwell. This difference was also noticed by Isaac Ray, superintendent of the Butler Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island. In describing British asylums, Ray wrote:

> It appeared to me that reading was much less common than with us. This might have been expected in institutions a large portion of whose inmates are unable to read at all, and as many more who have read too little to derive much pleasure from the exercise. But even among the better classes of patients, I saw few books lying about as compared with the abundance usually seen in our establishments. A newspaper, I very seldom saw (50).

An idea of the great number and variety of newspapers available in American mental institutions can be obtained from the 1851 annual report of the State Lunatic Asylum in Utica, New York. In this report, the superintendent, Dr. Amariah Brigham, wrote:

> The amount of reading matter we are able to place in the hands of the patients is very large. Our patients receive in exchange for "The Opal," a newspaper edited by themselves, two hundred and twenty weeklies, 4 semi-weeklies, 8 dailies and 33 monthlies, and the list is still upon the increase. These embrace most of the popular magazines, such as Harper, Graham, Godey, Sartain, &c., and papers and periodicals from every part of our own State, and from nearly all the other States of the Union, representing every party of politics, every religious denomination and many published in the French, Welsh, and German languages. We are therefore enabled to offer intellectual food and a constant intercourse with the transactions of the world, to our whole family. This is a source of unspeakable comfort, especially to those who have been long here and who cannot look for actual reunion with society (51).

Another institution liberally supplied with newspapers was the Ohio Lunatic Asylum in Columbus. In the 1851 annual report it is stated,

> The number of editors and publishers who have laid us under obligations during the past year, is larger than ever, and the list of newspapers and periodicals

> presented by them to the asylum, is continually extending, as will be seen by a reference to it in the appendix (52).

The appendix lists the titles and place of publication of 138 periodicals and newspapers currently being donated. The situation was similar in most American asylums of that time. Newspapers were considered ideal reading material for mental patients because they contained something for everyone, the articles were short, and they were light reading. Also, a newspaper from the patient's home town was the next best thing to a letter from home. Newspapers were not an unmixed blessing, however. Galt quotes Dr. William Awl, of the Ohio Lunatic Asylum, as saying,

> Avoid all papers that are filled with horrible suicides and murders. There certainly cannot be a greater mistake than to select articles of this character and mark them with a pencil in order to attract their notice (53).

Galt goes on to say that at the Western Lunatic Asylum, in Staunton, Virginia, one of the officers of the asylum looks carefully over the newspapers before they fall into the hands of the patients.

Although a plentiful supply of Bibles was to be found in most American mental hospitals, the book stock of the libraries was not as top-heavy with religious works as were the British institutions. The staple of the American asylum libraries, according to Galt, consisted of history, biography, travels, reviews, and such standard writers of fiction as Sir Walter Scott, Miss Edgeworth[4] and Mrs. Sherwood[5]. The complete works of these authors were available in sets, and it would seem that when a new patients' library was being formed, these sets were among the first things to be acquired. The works of Scott were by far the most popular. An idea of his popularity can be obtained from the 1865 annual report of the Kings County Insane Asylum:

> It is evident they prefer light reading, especially novels, of which the Waverly novels are decidedly the highest in favor. Our copy of Waverly is, in fact, by six years constant use, literally *read to pieces*, and any person who will donate a fresh copy to our library will be held in grateful remembrance by a multitude of readers (54).

Galt mentions approvingly the fact that in Britain, patients who were avid readers often were able to obtain books from nearby subscription libraries, a practice which does not seem to have taken hold in the United

[4] Maria Edgeworth, 1767–1849, a friend of Scott's, wrote novels depicting Irish peasant life.

[5] Mary Martha (Butt) Sherwood, 1775–1851, wrote moral and religious stories, mostly for young readers.

States. This may account, to some extent, for the relative smallness of the British mental hospital libraries.

With regard to reading the Bible, Galt quotes Dr. George Chandler, superintendent of the New Hampshire Asylum in Concord, as exemplifying the prevailing views and practices in American asylums:

> The Scriptures are placed in the hands of all whose disease does not lead them to make an improper use of them. Sometimes patients read and search the Bible to find passages to substantiate their delusions. Except in a few instances of this kind, the perusal of the Scriptures tends wholly to good, for therein is written the law of love and kindness, of justice and truth; and therein is taught nothing that vitiates the conscience, injures the health or deranges the mind (55).

Galt's own views on the subject of Bible reading can be found in the 1844 annual report of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum. Here, in the section on religious exercises, he wrote:

> In connection with this subject we would remark that the book most read and desired by the patients is the Bible. Several of these were bought at the time of procuring a library. But perhaps it would be a good plan to give one to most quiet patients who read. There are many who peruse the Bible as a daily exercise, and there would probably be more if there were a greater number of copies. It is in this way that all those procured were soon borrowed, or given at their request to particular patients. Reading the scriptures is considered in most of our asylums, as scarcely ever calculated to injure any patient: of course the mere act of reading is in itself beneficial, as a mode of occupation (56).

Galt says that even for those patients with religious delusions, withholding the Bible would probably have no effect, since they would probably still remember the offending texts anyway. He particularly recommends Bible reading for the melancholy, suggesting that the more consoling chapters in the Psalms and New Testament be marked and that the melancholic patients be required to read them daily.

The section on reading in the essay, "On Reading, Recreation and Amusements for the Insane," concludes with a few remarks about the administration of the library. A yearly appropriation for the purchase of books is recommended. The assistant physician is usually put in charge of the library. In some institutions a certain day is appointed for circulating books, whereas in other institutions the patients have free access to the library throughout the week. Dr. Galt is definitely in favor of putting book circulation on a systematic basis, presumably so that the superintendent can keep track of who reads what. Galt considers it highly important that the superintendent have complete knowledge of the reading of each of his patients. There should be rules to ensure that the books are handled carefully. The reading room should be a comfortable, pleasant place, "furnished with books, newspapers, prints, illustrated

works, maps, globes, &c., and it might not be amiss to add also such philosophical toys as the prism, the microscope, and the kaleidescope" (57).

Other ways of acquiring books were by gifts, which were gratefully acknowledged in some detail in the annual reports, by staging fairs and bazaars, the proceeds being used to buy books, and by exchange. At a number of hospitals the patients wrote and published their own newspapers and magazines, which would be exchanged with other asylums and editors of journals, and sold to former patients. Besides *The Opal* at Utica, there were *The Illuminator* at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, the *Asylum Gazette* at the New Hampshire Asylum for the Insane, the *Asylum Journal* at the Vermont Asylum for the Insane, and *The Pearl* at the Friends Asylum.

In some hospitals the librarian was one of the patients; in others it was a "teacher." Among the rules governing the duties of teachers at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane were the following:

> They will pass through the different wards frequently in each day, will advise the patients in the selection of books, encourage them to engage in the different kinds of employment, suggest means of amusement, and by their conversation and example do all in their power to promote their happiness, and aid in carrying out the wishes of the physician.
>
> As may be directed by the physician, they will impart instruction to certain patients, read and superintend amusements, in the different wards at stated hours, and take such part in the entertainments in the lecture-room as may be deemed desirable (58).

These rules were undoubtedly the outcome of Benjamin Rush's recommendations.

In some libraries, the number of "philosophical toys," stuffed animals, and geological specimens was enough to constitute a museum. In fact, in some institutions museums were actually established, usually in conjunction with the library or reading room. Among the hospitals which had museum/libraries were the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, New York, the State Lunatic Asylum of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton.

In 1846, Galt published his most famous work, *The Treatment of Insanity*. It was not an original work but a compendium, in near telegraphic style, of the French, British, and American literature on the treatment of the insane. The section on American asylums was taken largely, if not entirely, from the annual reports of these asylums. Of the eighteen institutions discussed by Galt in this section, the libraries of eleven of them are described or at least mentioned. While it is not pos-

sible here to describe these libraries, the obvious fact remains that library service to mental patients in nineteenth century America was quite extensive and fairly sophisticated. It is, in fact, doubtful if many patients' libraries of today could match the resources of some of these early libraries, or the resourcefulness of those who made them what they were. Contemporary American bibliotherapists might well take a few lessons from Benjamin Rush and John Minson Galt, II, who did so much to make the therapeutic value of reading known and appreciated.

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